

DEFENSE TRAVEL SYSTEM

The Travel Advisor

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Defense Travel System

Please contact the DTS Helpdesk if interested in attending a training course, provide name, unit, telephone number and e-mail address.

Upcoming DTS Training Courses and Locations

Organization Defense Travel Administrator (ODTA) Dates and Locations:

- 09-11 October 2012, Kaiserslautern, Germany, Digital Training Facility - Pulaski Barracks Bldg. 2874C
- 23-25 October 2012, Vilseck, Germany, Digital Training Facility - Vilseck Rose Barracks, BLDG 355
- 30 Oct—01 Nov 2012, Kaiserslautern, Germany, Digital Training Facility - Pulaski Barracks Bldg. 2874C
- 13-15 November 2012, Vilseck, Germany, Digital Training Facility - Vilseck Rose Barracks, BLDG 355
- 11-13 December 2012, Kaiserslautern, Germany, Kleber Kaserne Bldg. 3200
- 18-20 December 2012, Vilseck, Germany, Digital Training Facility - Vilseck Rose Barracks, BLDG 355

Approving and Routing Official (AO/RO) Dates and Locations:

- 12 October 2012, Kaiserslautern, Germany, Digital Training Facility - Pulaski Barracks Bldg. 2874C
- 26 October 2012, Vilseck, Germany, Digital Training Facility - Vilseck Rose Barracks, BLDG 355
- 02 November 2012, Kaiserslautern, Germany, Digital Training Facility - Pulaski Barracks Bldg. 2874C
- 16 November 2012, Vilseck, Germany, Digital Training Facility - Vilseck Rose Barracks, BLDG 355
- 14 December 2012, Kaiserslautern, Germany, Kleber Kaserne Bldg. 3200
- 21 December 2012, Vilseck, Germany, Digital Training Facility - Vilseck Rose Barracks, BLDG 355

Travel Training Dates and Locations:

- 03 October 2012, Kaiserslautern, Germany, Digital Training Facility - Pulaski Barracks Bldg. 2874C
- 20-21 November 2012, Kaiserslautern, Germany, Digital Training Facility - Pulaski Barracks Bldg. 2874C
- TBD December (Please call) 2012, Kaiserslautern, Germany, Kleber Kaserne Bldg. 3200

Government Travel Credit Card (GTCC) Training Dates and Locations:

- 18 October 2012, Kaiserslautern, Germany, Digital Training Facility - Pulaski Barracks Bldg. 2874C
- TBD November (Please call), Kaiserslautern, Germany, Digital Training Facility - Pulaski Barracks Bldg. 2874C
- TBD December (Please call), Kaiserslautern, Germany, Digital Training Facility - Pulaski Barracks Bldg. 2874C

72-Hour

Auto Cancellation

Beginning October 1, 2012, any authorization that includes air travel must be approved within 72 hours in advance of the trip start date to avoid airline reservation cancellation. This is due to the new policy being instituted by the airlines under the FY13 GSA City Pair Program contract.

Under the new policy, if an Authorizing Official (AO) does not approve an authorization within 72 hours of departure, the airline reservation will be cancelled and the traveler will arrive at the airport without a ticket or a reservation in the airline's system. This applies to all City Pair and non-contract government flights that are either booked through DTS or through a Commercial Travel Office (CTO). Those travelers making travel plans within 72 hours of departure must have their authorization approved within 24 hours of creation to avoid cancellation. Arriving at the airport without a ticket can impact mission, travel funds, and put unnecessary stress on the traveler. Travelers are not advised to rebook at the airline counter. Often, counter agents are not familiar with GSA's City Pair Program and may book the traveler on a full priced fare at a much higher cost due to the last minute booking. To rebook a flight, travelers should follow their normal travel ticket procurement process. In the near future, DTS will be modified to automatically send a notification to the traveler before cancellation occurs. Until this change can be implemented, travelers will not receive any notification. In the current fiscal environment there it is necessary to be conservative with travel budgets, monitoring the statuses of travel documents and ensuring travel authorizations are approved, is the best way to avoid unnecessary costs and stress associated with rebooking travel.

Tips for Travelers

- **Monitor authorization**

If your trip is approaching and your authorization hasn't been approved, contact your Approving Official (AO) immediately. If your AO is not available, contact your Organization Defense Travel Administrator (ODTA).

- **Ensure your DTS Profile is current**

Often, travelers forget to update their profile with the Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) information or Government Travel Credit Card (GTCC) expiration date if they received a new card. Without a current card in your profile, a reservation cannot be purchased.

- **Check the status of your GTCC**

Some organizations deactivate a traveler's GTCC if he/she is not scheduled for any travel. It is important to ensure that your card is reactivated so your airline ticket can be purchased upon travel authorization approval.

- **Cancel reservations as soon as you know the trip is cancelled**

This opens up inventory to those that may need that seat.

- **Take your travel itinerary with you to the airport**

If your reservation has been cancelled, the itinerary will provide contact information for assistance, as well as, reservation details to help you rebook.

Tips for ODTAs and APCs

- **Run the Approved Status Report**

More frequently to assist travelers and AOs with travel that is "at risk" of cancellation.

- **Run Traveler Status Reports**

To notify Agency Program Coordinators (APCs) which travelers are scheduled for travel to ensure GTCCs are activated.

- **Run an Accounts Information Report**

Monthly and send to your APC to verify validity and expiration dates of GTCCs in DTS profiles.

Tips for ROs and AOs

- **Monitor documents awaiting your approval**

- **Ensure a back-up RO / AO is designated**

If you will be on leave or deployed.

Tips for APCs

- **Review the Accounts Information Reports**

Advise DTAs regarding invalid and expired GTCCs.

- **Review the Approved Status Report**

To Amend or Not to Amend

That is the Question

When is it necessary, or even prudent to amend your authorization? Well, that depends. Back in the old days (pre-DTS) Orders were amended every time anything was added, removed, or changed. With the dawn of a new era (DTS) having multiple amendments is no longer necessary. The majority of changes can be made when creating the voucher.

The traveler makes amendments after the AO has approved the travel document. The traveler usually makes an amendment because trip arrangements are changed prior to the trip, significant additional expenses are identified or accounting codes have changed. First let's discuss some **DON'T'S**:

Travel dates change. If dates of travel change, usually up to seven days before or after the scheduled travel date, no amendment is necessary. To change the airlines reservations, simply call your servicing SATO and request a flight transfer. Once travel is completed, change the dates on the voucher.

Forgot an expense, i.e. laundry, parking, hotel sales tax. To add an expense (with the exception of Registration Fees), no amendment is necessary. Expenses can be added or changed on the voucher.

Remove an expense. No amendment is necessary; remove the expense on the voucher.

Now, some **DO'S**:

If on an extended TDY and receiving Scheduled Partial Pay and there is a significant change in lodging costs, or dates of travel, etc, then an amendment is necessary to ensure that the partial payments are correct and reduce the chances of the traveler ending up in a Due US status.

If there is a major expense change, significant rental vehicle charges or other large expenses added or removed etc, an amendment should be processed to keep the estimated TDY costs as close as possible.

Registration Fee: These fees **must be** on the authorization and can not be added to the voucher. Amend the authorization and add the fees in the expense category.

While there may be other situations where it is necessary to amend an authorization, it is not a requirement to amend for all changes. To lessen potential problems or situations, be cautious when amending. There is no standard answer for when to or not to amend. However, there is one simple rule. **Once your Authorization has received a Pos Ack (positive acknowledgement) stamp, if at all possible leave it alone. Remember, the less changes that are made, the smoother the travel process.**

New Options for Managing GTCC Accounts

Refunds Available Through Direct Deposit

Instead of receiving a credit balance refund through a mailed paper check, cardholders can now elect receive their refund through direct deposit (known as, electronic funds transfer (EFT)). Simply requesting the refund through the secure CitiManager website, cardholders can have their refund directly deposited into their accounts within two to three business days. In order to take advantage of the new direct deposit option, a credit balance of \$4,999.99 or less must present on your account for at least 10 calendar and there cannot be two or more unresolved disputed transactions on the account. Credit balance refunds of \$5,000.00 or more must be coordinated directly with Citi. To request an electronic refund, go to the "Request Refund" tab under the Statement section of the CitiManager website. For step-by-step instructions, review the "Request for Credit Balance Refund" tutorial found under the Resources>Links>Help tab.

Go Paperless

Did you know that in 2011, Citi mailed 8,925,011 Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) statements to DoD personnel? That amounts to roughly 1,116 trees that could have been saved if DoD cardholders elected to receive electronic statements in lieu of printed statements. Each month Citi mails more travel card statements to Defense Department personnel than other non-

DoD Agencies and the commercial sector. In response, Citi is encouraging DoD cardholders to sign up for its *Go Paperless* program which allows cardholders to receive electronic statements, monitor account activity and make online payments. When cardholders sign up, they will receive a monthly email that alerts them when their statements are ready to be viewed online. It's easy to sign up for this program – simply log in to CitiManager and select "My Card Account" and select the "Go Paperless" option.

CitiManager© is Citi's user interface for online Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) assistance, tools and more.

To access, go to: <https://home.cards.citidirect.com/CommercialCard/Cards.html>. First time users can register for access by clicking on the "Self Registration for Cardholders" link on the homepage.

Receive Mobile Alerts

Cardholders can receive mobile alerts regarding their GTCC by registering their phone number with Citi. Two important notifications can be sent directly to a mobile device including:

- Informational Alerts.** These alerts tell cardholders when a statement is ready, a payment is due, past due or when one has been made. Once a phone number is registered, cardholders must sign up to receive these alerts. Informational alerts may be subject to standard text messaging fees charged by your service provider.

- Fraud Alerts.** Automatic notifications sent if Citi identifies potential fraudulent activity on a cardholder's government travel charge card account. Once a phone number is registered with Citi, there is no need to subscribe; cardholders will automatically receive fraud alerts. Fraud alerts are provided at no additional cost to the cardholder. To receive these alerts, cardholders must register their phone number in CitiManager. In order to suspend the optional information alerts, cardholders can text "STOP" to GOCITI (462484).

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Baggage Allowances and Fees - Know Before You Go

Each airline has its own policy regarding baggage allowances and fees for Service members and government travelers. According to the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR, par. C2302) and the Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR, par. U3015), baggage fees are reimbursable when authorized and incurred on official business.

Bags that exceed the baggage allowance, both in number and size or weight, may be subject to excess baggage fees and may be required to be checked through a cargo counter. Excess baggage fees are reimbursable if your Service/Agency Authorizing Official determines that the expenses are necessary and in the government's interest. Service members are often extended many exceptions to fees charged, however they should adhere to size and weight allowances.

It is recommended that travelers always check an airline's website for specific policies regarding baggage fees. If traveling on a City Pair flight, you can find detailed information on baggage fees on the GSA web site, www.gsa.gov

Your Reimbursement Could Be Affected - Keeping Your DTS Profile Up to Date

It is important for travelers to ensure that Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), home address, and Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) information is current in their DTS profile. If this information is not kept up to date, travel reimbursements may be affected. In addition to the information above, travelers should periodically check their profiles in order to update other information such as rank, organization, phone number, emergency contact and other traveler information.

When should I update my profile?

- GTCC expires or is reissued
- Moving/Permanent Change of Station

Promotion/New job

Steps for Updating Your Profile Information in DTS

1. From your DTS homepage (after login), mouse over to Traveler Setup on the top menu bar and select Update Personal Profile.
2. On the My Profile screen, click on each section to verify your information (My Preferences, My Additional Information, My TSA Information, My Account Information). Save changes, select the Update Personal Information button at the bottom of the screen.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

JFTR U4102 Circumstances in which Per-Diem is not Authorized for Reimbursement

- Travel or TDY within PDS Limits. Except as authorized in par. U4105-H, per diem is not authorized for travel or TDY performed within the PDS limits. This does not preclude per diem payment on the departure day from or return day to the PDS ICW TDY away from the PDS.
- TDY within the PDS Local Area (Outside the PDS Limits). A member is not authorized per diem for TDY performed within the PDS local area (outside the PDS limits) as defined in par. U2800-B, unless overnight lodging is required. Occasional meals may be paid under par. U4510 when the member is required to procure meals at personal expense outside the PDS limits. See par. U3040 for transportation allowances. This does not preclude per diem 'IE' payment IAW par. U1245 for a member hospitalized within the PDS local area.
- Round Trip within 12 Hours. A member is not authorized per diem for TDY that is performed entirely within 12 hours. Occasional meals may be reimbursed IAW par. U4510 when the member is required to procure a meal(s) at personal expense outside the PDS limits.

JFTR U4147 PER DIEM FOR DEPARTURE FROM AND RETURN TO PDS

A. Rate. 75% of the appropriate locality M&IE rate is paid for the days of departure from and/or return to the PDS ICW TDY, regardless of what time the member departs or returns. On these days, the GMR, PMR, \$3.50 OCONUS IE, or reduced per diem rate do not apply.

JFTR T4040 LIVING EXPENSES (PER DIEM)

The "Lodgings-Plus" computation method is used to reimburse TDY living expenses. A traveler is paid the actual lodging cost up to a limit, plus a set amount for M&IE. Per diem rates for lodging and M&IE vary by location, but should be sufficient for a comfortable, safe trip. A traveler also can be reimbursed for other necessary allowable travel-related reimbursable expenses (APP G) if the AO authorizes/approves them as appropriate to the mission.

JFTR T4040-A-9B. Eating

When actual dining facility/mess availability differs from the pre-trip information, the AO may authorize/approve a higher rate (e.g., from PMR plus IE to the locality M&IE rate). The meal rate established cannot be reduced after-the-fact except for a free meal as described in par.

JFTR-JTR COST CONSTRUCTIVE TRAVEL

Immediate change to the JFTR and JTR regarding privately owned conveyance (POC) travel. For travel performed on or after September 26, 2012, the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee (PDTATAC) has determined that POC use on TDY is more advantageous to the government for locations within 800 miles (roundtrip) as determined from DTOD. What is significant about this change is that commands no longer have to do a cost comparison of the POC costs against the air travel. This also means that travel offices are no longer required to do a cost construction for POC mileage within 800 roundtrip DTOD miles.

This regulatory change just puts internal rule of thumb in compliance with the provisions of the JFTR and JTR.